

Pioneer Press, November 15, 2007

As temperatures continue to drop, U.S. Representative Mark Kirk, and federal and local officials urged the public Monday to exercise caution when purchasing firewood to help stop the spread of the deadly emerald ash borer, a beetle that has destroyed more than 25 million ash trees since its introduction from Asia in 2002.

Kirk was joined at Northbrook's Red's Garden Center by Northbrook Village President Gene Marks, Wilmette Village President Chris Canning and garden center owner Jeff Sibley.

"This time of year many families stock up on firewood and take it with them as they travel during the holiday season," Kirk said. "It's important to remember that the emerald ash borer came to the United States in firewood or other wood-packing material, so it is critical that we don't contribute to the further spread of the beetle.

"Cheap firewood is no bargain," Kirk warned.

Since 2006 the 10th Congressional District towns of Wilmette and Winnetka have reported tree infestations. The following Illinois counties are under state quarantine: Boone, Cook, DeKalb, DuPage, Grundy, Kane, Kankakee, Kendall, Lake, LaSalle, McHenry, Putnam, Will and Winnebago, and parts of Ogle, Lee, Bureau and Livingston counties.

All hardwoods should not leave quarantined areas. Ash nursery stock, ash materials including logs, stumps, roots, branches and chips also are banned from transport.